

II. REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Petition for Revival

Applicants hereby petition for revival of this application, which was unintentionally abandoned, in accordance with 37 C.F.R. § 1.137(b). A petition document and the requisite fee are included with this submittal.

Request For Continued Examination

Applicants hereby submit a Request for Continued Examination (“RCE”). Reconsideration of the application as amended is requested. The requisite fee is included with this submittal.

Specification

The specification has been amended to more clearly describe the floor of the vehicle as a body structure. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment, as the floor was disclosed in the original specification. This further description of the floor does not change its original meaning. Furthermore, the floor of a vehicle is recognized by those skilled in the art as a body structure.

Claims

Claims 1 and 20 have been amended to further distinguish the claimed invention over the prior art cited by the examiner, as discussed in detail below. No new matter has been added by these amendments, the subject matter being amply disclosed in the specification and figures.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 102

Claims 1 and 2 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,742,841 to Soditch et al. (“Soditch”). In response, applicants submit herewith a declaration under 37 C.F.R. § 1.131 antedating the Soditch reference filed May 23, 2003. Support for applicants’ claimed invention may be found in Exhibit A, attached thereto. The language of Claim 1 has also been amended to resolve the objections raised by the examiner in the Advisory Action mailed May 30, 2007.

Applicants submit that Claim 1 is now in form for allowance. Claim 2 depends from Claim 1 and adds limitations that further distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art. As such, applicants submit that Claim 2 is also now allowable.

Claim Rejections – 35 U.S.C. § 103

Claims 3, 4 and 10-15 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Soditch in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,826,942 to Sutton et al. (“Sutton”). Applicants submit that amended Claim 1, from which Claims 3, 4 and 10-15 ultimately depend, is patentable over the cited art for the reasons given above (see “35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections”). Since Claims 3, 4 and 10-15 add limitations to those of Claim 1 that further distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art, applicants submit that Claims 3, 4 and 10-15 are patentably distinct from the combination of Soditch and Sutton.

Claims 6-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Soditch in view of U.S. Pat. No. 5,707,103 to Balk (“Balk”). Applicants submit that amended Claim 1, from which Claims 6-9 ultimately depend, is patentable over the cited art for the reasons given above (see “35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections”). Since Claims 6-9 add limitations to those of Claim 1 that further distinguish the claimed invention from the prior art, applicants submit that Claims 6-9 are patentably distinct from the combination of Soditch and Balk.

Claim 20 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Soditch in view of Sutton and Balk. Applicants have amended independent Claim 20 in much the same manner as Claim 1. Applicants submit that Claim 20 is now in form for allowance for the same reasons as presented above for Claim 1 (see “35 U.S.C. § 102 Rejections”).

III. CONCLUSION

For the reasons discussed above, applicants submit that amended Claims 1-4, 6-15 and 20 of the pending application are patentable over all the prior art of record. It is believed that the application is now in form for allowance and favorable action by the examiner is requested. The examiner is requested to contact applicants' representative at the telephone number below if any other issues remain.

Respectfully Submitted,

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